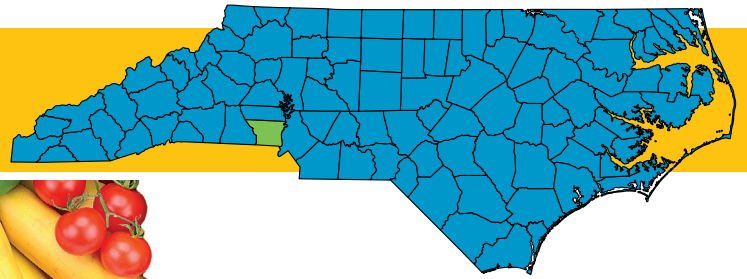




EFNEP
EXPANDED FOOD AND NUTRITION
EDUCATION PROGRAM



2016 NC Cooperative Extension Gaston County Report

North Carolina's Challenges

- In North Carolina, **1 in 4** children live in poverty.
- North Carolina's adult obesity rate is currently **30%**.
- **15.2%** of 2- to 4-year-olds from low-income families are obese. This makes us the **7th** most obese state.
- North Carolina has the **18th** highest rate of diabetes and the **11th** highest rate of hypertension.

Supporting North Carolina's Families with Greatest Needs Since 1969

EFNEP helps address the challenges limited resource families face when introducing healthy changes through nutrition education, cooking classes, physical activity strategies, and shopping on a limited budget. EFNEP provides:

- Peer-to-peer, hands-on education in the community
- Healthy, low-cost recipes
- Simple strategies to help families move more together



EFNEP Reaches Diverse Audiences in Gaston County

In 2016: **9** families enrolled in EFNEP
335 participated in 4-H EFNEP
22% of EFNEP participants enrolled in one or more food assistance programs.

WHAT IS EFNEP?

EFNEP serves limited-resource families with young children, school-age youth, and pregnant teens through a series of lessons offered by paraprofessionals and volunteers, many of whom are indigenous to the population. In 2016, EFNEP served 45 counties in North Carolina. Participants learned how to:

- Make wise food choices
- Increase daily physical activity
- Manage food resources
- Practice food safety

EFNEP Makes a Real Difference in Gaston County

- 82%** of EFNEP participants improved dietary intake.
- 31%** now practice daily physical activity.
- 75%** practice better food resource management.
- 46%** have improved their food safety habits.

Volunteers Strengthen EFNEP

In 2016, **17** adults and youth donated time to EFNEP, making a difference in their own communities and contributing to EFNEP's ongoing success.



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Gaston County
EFNEP programs obtained

\$7,020

in funding and support
from local efforts.

EFNEP SUCCESS



By graduation, EFNEP had kept its promise and given this mother the answers needed to improve her family's eating behaviors.



Concerned Mom Learns Skills to Improve Healthy Choices for Daughter

American families live in a fast paced society where every day demands take a toll on family mealtimes. This is particularly true for low-income heads of households who work one or more jobs outside the home. Issues like long work hours that limit their time, and concerns related to job satisfaction and security turn planning, shopping for and preparing nutritious meals into an overwhelming challenge.¹ In addition, many heads of households lack the confidence and basic cooking skills needed to create nutritious meals. Unfortunately, the more disconnected the family becomes from making meals at home, the fewer healthy foods like fruits and vegetables are consumed by their families.

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) is an educational intervention that has proven results in providing limited income families the confidence and skills needed to eat healthy meals at home. By teaching fundamental food resource management, nutrition basics, and food safety practices, EFNEP teaches families to plan, shop, fix and eat healthy meals when time and resources are limited. It also encourages them to share the skills learned with their families by turning mealtimes into family times, occasions when they can work together and communicate with one another while preparing and eating a healthy meal.

In Gaston County a participant came to her first EFNEP class concerned about the quality of food her daughter was eating. She asked the question, "How do I get my child to eat foods other than French fries and fast food?" Knowing the United States Healthful Food Council has reported that "the average American adult buys a meal or a snack from a restaurant 5.8 times a week, and more than 30 percent of children eat fast food on any given day,"² EFNEP understood her concern. It promised by graduation she would have the answers needed.

The participant attended all nine classes. At each one she learned ways to improve her daughter's diet. She learned to plan meals by first taking inventory of the food she had in her cupboards and using what she had on hand. She learned to create a grocery list and buy only listed items when shopping. And, she also learned to pay attention to unit pricing and read the Nutrition Facts labels to get the most nutritional value for her money. Through hands-on food preparation activities, she learned how to read recipes and use simple cooking techniques to prepare healthy dishes from the EFNEP cookbook.

At home, the participant practiced the cooking skills taught in class and began to involve her daughter in the family's meal planning and preparation activities. By allowing her to select favorite fruits at the grocery store and prepare her own breakfast, her daughter was also learning healthier eating habits. By graduation, EFNEP had kept its promise and given this mother the answers needed to improve her family's eating behaviors. Her daughter was eating fewer fast foods and French fries, and instead working in the kitchen with her to prepare healthy meals.

References:

1. http://www.human.cornell.edu/outreach/upload/CHE_DNS_Devine_Time.pdf
2. United States Healthful Food Council, 2016, www.ushfc.org.

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